

to face up to this. Mr. Speaker, the alternative in the private sector would be, again, you would go to jail, because you would violate the ERISA laws and standards set up by this Congress.

The only difference is this is a public entity, so we are not here to impose any harm, we are not here to impose any tax, we are here to say that, you know, the piper must be paid; that we can't continue robbing Peter to pay Paul in this fashion, that we must act in a sensible, responsible fashion.

With that, Mr. Speaker, again, I thank you for bringing this to the attention of this Congress, and for the RECORD, that we, and I as the chairman, and you as members of this Government Reform and Oversight Committee, we saw the problem, we identified the problem, we proposed a solution, and we are committed to work with all the Members of this Congress to try to bring, again, this important responsibility that we have, that we are cast with, into some order, into some fashion, and so that people look back and they say, "You know, what did they do in 1995? Did they ignore this, or did they find a solution?"

We propose that solution, we offer it to the Congress. We hope they won't play politics, that they will be out there with public employees and others stirring up the pot, and saying, "No, no, no, this will go away," because I tell you, Mr. Speaker, this will not go away. It must be addressed. We must have responsible leaders and responsible actions, just as you have outlined here, and just as you present in the fashion that you have in this special order tonight.

I personally thank you. I thank you on behalf of our subcommittee and committee, and I thank you on behalf of a future generation of Federal retirees and people that are in the system now and counting on us to act in a responsible fashion.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. GUTKNECHT. I yield to the gentleman from Maryland.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman yielding. Frankly, Mr. Speaker, I have been in committee and did not know there was a special order on this issue.

Mr. Speaker, the gentleman says he would like to work together. It would have been nice if we had had somebody here who perhaps has a little different perspective than the gentleman from Florida. As he knows, a number of studies have been done within the past few weeks which indicate that the problem of which the gentleman has spoken, apparently for about an hour, does not exist.

That is not to say that we don't contribute \$19.8 billion a year. We do. We contribute that money, as all of you know, for the purposes of funding a retirement system for our employees. I understand the gentleman has been very concerned about saying we ought to have a fund on hand.

Social Security, of course, is off the table. There is no fund on hand, as the gentleman well knows, for Social Security, which is our largest unfunded liability, if you will, in certain senses. But I am disappointed, Mr. Speaker, that I was unable, given the timeframe, to participate in this debate. This is a good debate. This is a debate we ought to have. My friend, I understand, mentioned that earlier.

I am fully prepared to participate in that debate. What I am, however, concerned about is that a system that affects 2 million people is being rushed to judgment without having the ability to get the votes in your committee.

The markup was adjourned. It now is before the Committee on Rules and included in your tax bill to pay for your tax cut.

□ 1630

I regret that the time has expired, but I look forward to discussing with my colleagues this issue. It is an important issue.

I believe the facts will show that there is not the depth of the problem that I think my colleagues perceive and that there are ways and means to solving the problem, without getting large sums by putting a tax on existing Federal employees, which averages about 10 percent in the coming 2 to 3 years.

I thank my colleague for yielding.

#### INTRODUCTION OF LEGISLATION TO RESTRICT FLIGHTS OVER CERTAIN AREAS OF HAWAII'S NATIONAL PARK SYSTEM

The SPEAKER pro tempore [Mr. FOX of Pennsylvania]. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Hawaii [Mrs. MINK] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MINK of Hawaii. Mr. Speaker, the air tour helicopter industry in the State of Hawaii has recently experienced tremendous growth that is forecasted to continue. Helicopter tours provide a unique opportunity to view the natural beauty of parts of my State, especially the distinctive characteristics of Hawaii's national parks. The elderly, disabled, and others who would otherwise be unable to see the parks on foot are enabled by helicopters.

However, despite these advantages, noise disturbances in the parks have increased with the growth of the industry that have agitated hikers, campers, adjacent residents, and native animal species whose precious habitat is being conserved by the parks. A balance must be struck between the helicopter industry and those rightfully wishing to enjoy the parks, which my legislation seeks to achieve.

I am reintroducing legislation that would apply specifically to overflights above Haleakala National Park, Hawaii Volcanoes National Park, Kaloko Honokohau National Historic Park, Pu'u Kohola Heiau National Historic Site, and Kalaupapa National Historical Park.

My bill applies to helicopter and fixed-wing flights over the designated park system units in Hawaii through the establishment of an above-ground standoff altitude of 1500-feet

and flight-free zones over specific parks. My bill would also address additional safety concerns by requiring short-term sightseeing flights which begin and end at the same airport and are conducted within a 25-mile radius to comply with stricter Federal Aviation Administration [FAA] flight standards.

Currently, the FAA has in place emergency regulations for commercial air tour operators in Hawaii requiring a 1500-foot minimum standoff distance or above-ground-level, implemented in October, 1994. FAA promulgated these regulations in response to a significant increase in the number of air tour crashes in Hawaii, including two in July 1994—one resulting in three fatalities. The regulations also included additional measures to improve safety within the industry: thorough self-review, use of flotation devices such as pontoons and lifejackets, pre-flight safety briefings, and mechanical recommendations for the operation of air tour vehicles.

Despite these regulations, many of my constituents continue to report tour helicopters flying and hovering at low altitudes near their homes and over the parks. The FAA has reported 20 enforcement actions raised against air tour operators for violations of the regulations. For these reasons, the need for my legislation is even more necessary. Similar legislation has already been put into place and successfully implemented for air tour operators at Grand Canyon National Park.

It is indisputed that Hawaii's commercial air tour industry is an integral part of the State's economy. However, the industry must be required to improve its standards of safety and noise control for the good of the State's residents, visitors and natural resources.

I urge my colleagues to support and take swift action on my legislation.

#### BOB JOHNSON: A GIANT IS GONE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas [Mr. BRYANT] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BRYANT of Texas. Mr. Speaker, one of the giants of Texas government is gone. As I speak, Bob Johnson, my friend and a dedicated servant of the people of Texas, is being laid to rest in the Texas State Cemetery in Austin.

Although Bob Johnson served four terms in the Texas House of Representatives, his greatest service was as director of the Texas Legislative Council and parliamentarian of the Texas House from 1963 to 1980 and parliamentarian of the Texas Senate from 1991 until his death on March 27, 1995, at the age of 66.

The offices he held, however, do not tell the full story of Bob Johnson or of his importance to my State and to those who have served it.

Although he sat at the left hand of the Speaker—a critical adviser to the presiding officer both on and off the floor—during my tenure in the Texas House of Representatives at a time when some of my colleagues and I led a vigorous opposition to the leadership, he was always honest, straightforward, and as helpful to the forces for reform as to those in control.